



# *CITY COUNCIL AGENDA REPORT*

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MEETING DATE: JULY 19, 2011

ITEM NUMBER:

**SUBJECT: SR-55 ACCESS STUDY UPDATE**

**DATE: JULY 7, 2011**

**FROM: PUBLIC SERVICES DEPARTMENT - TRANSPORTATION SERVICES DIVISION**

**PRESENTATION BY: PETER NAGHAVI, DIRECTOR, DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC SERVICES**

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: RAJA SETHURAMAN, TRANSPORTATION SERVICES MANAGER - (714) 754-5032**

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## **RECOMMENDATIONS:**

Receive and file report on the SR-55 Access Study.

## **BACKGROUND:**

The Costa Mesa Freeway (SR-55) currently terminates at 19<sup>th</sup> Street and continues south through Downtown Costa Mesa as Newport Boulevard. This major arterial, under the jurisdiction of the State of California Department of Transportation (Caltrans), carries over 100,000 vehicles per day at the SR-55 Freeway terminus at 19<sup>th</sup> Street. The result is severe congestion at several intersections within the downtown area, and the conditions are exacerbated during summer months due to beach traffic. Other related impacts include pedestrian accessibility issues, business access, and cut-through traffic within the adjacent east side residential streets.

The Caltrans Route Concept Report currently designates the SR-55 Freeway to extend south to Industrial Way in an easterly alignment with significant impacts to homes and businesses in Costa Mesa. In order to determine other alternatives to the extension of the SR-55 Freeway, OCTA, in cooperation with the City of Costa Mesa and participation by Caltrans and other agencies, initiated the SR-55 Access Study in May 2007. Based on the findings by the consultant team, and input from the Technical Advisory Committee (TAC), Policy Advisory Committee (PAC), and the public, seven project alternatives were developed. These alternatives are described and depicted in Attachment 1.

At the October 7, 2008, regular City Council meeting, all alternatives in Attachment 1 were considered, and the following four alternatives were recommended for further study:

- Alternative 1 – No Build/Baseline
- Alternative 3 – Transportation System Management
- Alternative 5 – Vertical Terminal Enhancement
- Alternative 7 – Cut and Cover Under Newport Boulevard

OCTA Board of Directors also approved a similar recommendation on October 27, 2008. Attachment 2 includes the SR-55 Access Study Executive Summary.

In July 2009, the Cities of Costa Mesa, Newport Beach, and Huntington Beach, sent a joint letter to OCTA requesting that the next phase of the study be initiated under the leadership of

OCTA using the cooperative study process involving all parties. OCTA concurred with the Cities' request and, in conjunction with the City of Costa Mesa and Caltrans, staff developed a scope of work for the next phase of the study.

On March 16, 2010, the Costa Mesa City Council approved a Cooperative Agreement with OCTA for funding and project management responsibilities. In addition, the City Council also approved a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) that included OCTA, Caltrans, and the Cities of Costa Mesa, Huntington Beach, and Newport Beach, identifying more specific agency roles and responsibilities for completing the study.

Funding for this phase of the SR-55 Access Study is primarily from the federal Regional Surface Transportation Program (RSTP) in the amount of \$1,000,000 and OCTA's Growth Management Area (GMA) grant of \$125,000.

### **ANALYSIS:**

The next phase of the SR-55 Access Study currently underway is the preparation of a Project Study Report/Project Development Support (PSR/PDS). A consultant team led by TRC Companies, Inc., was selected to prepare the PSR/PDS document. This document will be used to further analyze and refine the project alternatives, estimate project scope, schedule, and costs. While the PSR/PDS will be managed by OCTA, the extensive public outreach and business impact analysis is being led by the City of Costa Mesa.

Since the initiation of the project, the study team has been focused on two critical activities. The first is the initial planning and data collection activities required for completion of the PSR/PDS document to meet Caltrans' requirements. The other activity is to develop a comprehensive public involvement program, identifying key stakeholders and business representatives, as well as initiating data collection efforts through a comprehensive business survey.

The initial phase of the public involvement program is scheduled to begin this summer and extend through early fall. The primary goals of the initial phase are to re-introduce the project to the public and gather early feedback from stakeholder working groups. Major components of this phase of the public involvement program effort include the following:

- An initial business survey with key businesses in the area will be conducted. The goal of this survey is to gather information with respect to current business operations, transportation needs, and obtain an understanding of potential construction impacts to their operations.
- A Stakeholder Working Group meeting will be conducted with business and resident representatives to introduce the project and gather input on potential issues early in the project development process.
- A Public Open House will be conducted to re-introduce the project and inform the public of various ways to stay involved with the project and obtain information.
- A Business Working Group meeting will be conducted to further discuss business-related concerns from a larger audience of businesses. This meeting will discuss the results from the business survey and gather additional information.

Subsequent phases of the public involvement process will involve the above groups and will solicit input and comments as project alternatives become more refined. At the initiation of each subsequent phase of the public involvement process, staff will update the City Council of the project and present findings, as well as preview upcoming activities.

The funding for PSR/PDS is primarily from the federal Regional Surface Transportation Program (RSTP) grant and OCTA's Growth Management Area (GMA) program. A total of \$1,000,000 will be available from the RSTP grant and \$125,000 is programmed with GMA funds. Approximately \$25,000 of the City's share will be allocated from funds budgeted for the SR-55 Downgrade Study.

This PSR/PDS phase of the SR-55 Access Study is anticipated to be completed in mid 2013.

**ALTERNATIVES CONSIDERED:**

This report is to provide an update on the PSR/PDS phase of the SR-55 Access Study initiated approximately six months ago. There are no alternatives with this item.

**FISCAL REVIEW:**

There is no fiscal impact with this update report.

**LEGAL REVIEW:**

There is no legal review with this update report.

**CONCLUSION:**

In October 2008, OCTA and the City of Costa Mesa completed the SR-55 Access Study that recommended four alternatives for further consideration in the next phase of the study. This phase is called Project Study Report/Project Development Support (PSR/PDS), and it further analyzes the alternatives as well as develops cost estimates and a schedule for future activities. OCTA is the lead in the PSR/PDS stage with support from Caltrans, Costa Mesa, and other agencies.

A consultant team lead by TRC was selected for the SR-55 PSR/PDS phase. The public involvement program is underway and the study team, along with input from all agencies, is identifying key stakeholders and business representatives, as well as initiating data collection efforts through the comprehensive business survey. Staff will provide periodic updates to City Council at the conclusion of various milestones during this major study on the SR-55 and Downtown Costa Mesa.

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Transportation Services Manager

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**PETER NAGHAVI**, Director  
Department of Public Services

ATTACHMENTS:      1 - [SR-55 Access Study - Alternatives 1 through 7](#)  
                             2 - [SR-55 Access Study – Executive Summary](#)

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